

LOCAL ATTORNEY TURNED REALITY HOST HELPS OTHERS PURSUE THEIR DREAMS

Black Business

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By Christina Sturdivant Sani, Special to the AFRO

September is a big month for Andrea Hence Evans, an intellectual property attorney based in Prince George's County, Maryland.

With over 16 years of experience as a patent attorney, the full-time entrepreneur will make her debut on season two of PBS's "Make48" reality television series while simultaneously releasing her first hardcover book called *All About Inventing*.



Andrea Hence Evans (Courtesy Photo)

On the show, which airs September 9 on WETA, Evans will mentor participants who have 48 hours to turn their ideas into commercial products. "My role is to make sure they're not infringing on something that already exists," Evans told the *AFRO*.

In her book, she shares knowledge and best practices to help everyday people avoid mistakes when filing for patent applications. "Unlike most books that tell you to do this on your own, my goal is to educate so that you have things clearly outlined when you're ready

to speak to an attorney—you don't have to spend a lot of time understanding general terms, you're talking specifically about your invention," she said. "So ultimately I think it's going to save a lot of time and money as readers define what their invention is."

Evans' journey to becoming a highly regarded attorney began in Houston, Texas. Growing up in a family of scientists and engineers, she garnered a love for STEM subjects at an early age. After high school, she was granted a full scholarship from NASA to attend Spelman College and Georgia Tech, where she received bachelors degrees in mathematics and civil engineering, respectively.

With a goal of becoming a lawyer, she enrolled at George Washington University for law school. There, she was encouraged to take intellectual property classes given her scientific background. After multiple classes and internships, she fell in love with the idea of working with inventors and using her law expertise to help them.

"It's really like being an extension of a team and helping to see their dreams come to fruition," she said.

After moving up the ranks in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office over five years, she began to recognize a void. "What you'll find in this industry is most firms only represent large corporations so there's a huge gap among small business owners and individuals finding quality representation," she said. "I heard heart wrenching stories from inventors and entrepreneurs who were being taken advantage of."

After realizing there was a demand for her services she "stepped out on faith" and launched her own law firm, The Law Firm of Andrea Hence Evans, which has become an international brand.

Evans has also made a point to serve her local community, specifically children. According to research, she said, kids lose their interest in math and science by the third grade. After finding out that her daughter's elementary school didn't have a science club, she started a program called KidGINEER. The program has served more than 500 students since its inception and was honored by the Obama White House as a STEM Diversity and Access Champion of Change Award Recipient.

Whether on television, at conferences and schools, or in the pages of books, Evans' goal remains consistent. "I'm passionate about educating others about the importance of protecting their intellectual property and so I make it my personal mission to speak about it," she said.
